

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handling rotor blades of wind power installations, the apparatus comprising:

a carrier element connected with at least one rotor blade receiving means, wherein the rotor blade receiving means includes a carrier frame configured to enclose at least one rotor blade about at least three sides upon handling and at least one carrier bar extending perpendicularly with respect to the carrier element, a cross-section of the carrier bar being variable over at least one region. ; and

~~a ball rotary joint arranged on the carrier element.~~

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a ball rotary joint arranged on the carrier element; and

a rotary mechanism drive at the ball rotary joint.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of eyes mutually spaced in a longitudinal direction of the carrier element for receiving cables.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the carrier frame is configured to enclose the at least one rotor blade about four sides upon handling.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a locking member mounted pivotably at one side of the rotor blade receiving means.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the rotor blade receiving means is configured to engage the at least one rotor blade in a complementary locking relationship.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of cushions provided throughout the rotor blade receiving means .

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the cushions are inflatable.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 8 wherein the cushions include valves for inflating/deflating the cushions.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising at least one of an energy storage means, and/or pressure storage means, and/or a plug connector to connect one of an electrical, and/or hydraulic, and/or pneumatic line, wherein the energy storage means, pressure storage means, or plug connector is used to maintain a first pressure in a plurality of cushions located in the rotor blade receiving means.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~12~~1, further comprising: a carrier plate releasably fixed to the at least one carrier bar.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: a device for bolting the apparatus to a roller head of a crane.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of container corners positioned on at least one of either the top side and/or the underside of the apparatus.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the carrier element is rigid.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for securing and handling at least one rotor blade, the method comprising:

placing the at least one rotor blade into a carrier element that is configured to reduce an effect of the wind on the at least one rotor blade, a receiving means of the carrier element surrounding the at least one rotor blade on at least three sides;

protecting the at least one rotor blade against damage associated with a contact of the at least one rotor blade with the carrier element wherein protecting the at least one rotor blade includes extending a carrier bar of the receiving means perpendicularly with respect to the carrier element and varying a cross-section of the carrier bar over at least one region; and

handling the carrier element and the at least one rotor blade via a ball rotary joint mounted on the carrier element.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising: maneuvering the carrier element toward a wind power installation.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising: opening the carrier element to release the at least one rotor blade.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 wherein protecting the at least one rotor blade further includes inflating cushions located in the carrier element and substantially around the at least one rotor blade.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for handling rotor blades of wind power installations, the apparatus comprising:

a carrier element connected with at least one rotor blade receiving means, wherein the rotor blade receiving means includes a carrier frame configured to enclose at least one rotor blade about at least three sides upon handling wherein the rotor blade receiving means includes at least one carrier bar extending perpendicularly with respect to the carrier element, a cross-section of the carrier bar being variable over at least one region.